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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3375
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3239
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3900
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [OCSE](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: OSCE CENTER READOUT ON ITS
STATEMENT TO PERMANENT COUNCIL

REF: ASHGABAT 1122

Classified By: Charge Sylvia Reed Curran, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) On September 9, OSCE Center in Ashgabat Political Officer and Acting Head of Center Anne Suotula gave Charge a readout on the Center's annual Statement to the OSCE Permanent Council, presented on September 3 in Vienna. According to Suotula, the statement highlighted new areas in the Center's work, primarily in the human dimension sphere. These included media training, penitentiary reform, training of judges and prosecutors in human rights standards, and the opening of a hot line for victims of domestic violence. Suotula noted that the hot line is particularly noteworthy given that during a recent meeting by OSCE Special Representative for TIP Eva Biaudet with officials at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), Biaudet was told that there is no human trafficking, prostitution, domestic violence, or transnational crime in Turkmenistan. When the MVD official was pressed on this assertion, she suggested that if there were cases of domestic violence, then the victim was to blame. The officials were more willing to discuss domestic violence when the OSCE Special Representative pointed out that her home country of Finland also had this problem. Suotula mentioned that a joint Turkmenistan-Afghanistan customs border training project would begin at the end of September as a follow-up to a recently concluded project (reftel). She suggested that a study trip to the U.S.-Mexico border in 2010 would be a useful component.

12. (C) Suotula thought the reaction of the Turkmen government to the Statement had been "good." She noted that cooperation with the government has been expanding and that for 2009, 28 of the proposed 30 projects had been approved. She hoped for a similar outcome for the recently submitted list of proposed projects for 2010, pointing out that Head of Center Arsim Zekolli was willing to test the boundaries by including a project on shared experience in multi-party political systems. Suotula described the Russian response to the Statement as positive, although it included the standard Russian view that the Statement should have focused more on the Center's activities and less on political conditions in the country. The Russians also observed that the aim of OSCE

activity is to hand programs over to host countries and phase out the OSCE's role.

13. (C) COMMENT: Turkmen government cooperation with the OSCE has been improving, as evidenced by the increasing number and quality of projects that the OSCE has been able to implement.

It will be interesting to see if the positive momentum continues as the Center pushes programs, such as democratic development, that lie at the heart of the OSCE agenda but could easily appear anathema to the Turkmenistan government.
END COMMENT.

CURRAN